AN

APPEAL,

NOT TO THE GOVERNMENT,

BUT TO THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

WEST INDIAN SLAVERY.

"Lo, we turn to the Gentiles!"—Acts, chap. xiii, verse 46.

LONDON:

SOLD BY BALDWIN, CRADOCK, AND JOY, PATER-NOSTER-ROW;

AND BY THOMAS THOMPSON, LEICESTER.

MDCCCXXIV.

AN APPEAL,

&c. &c.

In making our appeal, not to the government, but to the PEOPLE of England on the subject of West Indian slavery, we are not disposed to use the language of reproach and contumely. Let it suffice to say, all *hope* of redress from the quarter whence it might most reasonably have been expected, having *utterly failed*, we turn to another.

We turn to the PEOPLE, the generous, noble-minded, the benevolent, christian people of England! so are they characterized; doubtless, on this great occasion, they will justify the character.

We have heard of THE MAJESTY OF THE PEOPLE; it may now shine forth with resplendent brightness. By taking the great business of SLAVE EMANCIPATION into their

own hands, the PEOPLE may take high and commanding ground, may assume the reins of legislation without incurring the penalty, the censure, even the suspicion, of usurpation. They may seat themselves in the chair of judgment, pronounce, with solemn emphasis, her sacred awards, and carry her respective sentences into certain and prompt execution. They may decide the destinies, as far as human power extends, of hundreds of thousands of human beings, and of their unborn progeny.

It was an ancient, but divine prediction, respecting a highly-favoured nation, that in the event of their departure from the eternal laws of equity and righteousness, "THE TAIL SHOULD BECOME THE HEAD, AND THE HEAD THE TAIL." Such an example may now be exhibited, and a most important and salutary one it will be; that governments may learn, WHEN THEY FAIL TO DO THEIR OWN DUTY, THE PEOPLE WILL DO IT FOR THEM; thus they may be provoked to a righteous jealousy, and stimulated to keep pace with the increasing intelligence and virtue of the people.

Some may take offence at the boldness of this language; may imagine that it savours of disrespect or disaffection "TO THE POWERS THAT BE." It is not, it must be admitted, the language of adulation, of fawning servility, of supple, undiscriminating acquiescence in all their purposes and doings. But, in the straight-forward language of truth, there is more of *real* than of *seeming* respect. There is a natural proneness, in all men, to self-flattery and self-delusion; those in exalted stations are most exposed to its baneful influence; they live in a polluted atmosphere; inhale, almost constantly, the tainted breath of parasites and sycophants; the fresh, wholesome breezes of truth are seldom permitted to blow upon them, and it is well for themselves, as well as the people whom they govern, that they are, now and then, exposed to a brisk gale or two; that her keen, searching blasts, now and then, drive away the fogs and feculence with which they are surrounded; when GOVERNMENTS decline the work of reform, it is well for them to know that the PEOPLE will take it upon themselves.

This is, according to the order of Providence, the established course of things. In arts and science, in knowledge and wisdom, one country and one class of society provokes another to jealousy; the inferior often stimulates the superior, by taking the lead in the road of honour and virtue. Thus the various sects of protestant dissenters, however obscure and despised on their first origin, have been the means, it is now universally admitted, of reforming that establishment which denounced them as schismatics and heretics.

The world would be, tenfold more than it is, "AN HABITATION OF CRUELTY;" human dragons and hyenas would multiply their abodes in it without number, were it not that man is kept in awe by man; the king by his subjects; as well as the subjects by the king; the governors by the people, as well as the people by the governors.

Will it not be a fine example, a noble precedent, to see the people taking this great business of SLAVE ABOLITION into

their own hands? Anticipating the tardy, reluctant progress of the legislature, and effecting this long *talked-of* emancipation, not by halves and by piece-meal, through endless delays and adjournments, but heartily, thoroughly, and speedily? How will such an example rouse the slumbering energies of our statesmen and senators; how will they open their eyes, look about, and bestir themselves, lest, in the department of *moral* legislation, they should be outstripped and supplanted by the growing energies, the advancing knowledge, and virtues of the people! The time, they will perceive, is gone by for gaping folly to gaze with awe-struck admiration on the trappings, the tinsel of greatness; the trance, they will perceive, is over, which held the people in wondering astonishment at high sounding but empty declamation against oppression and cruelty; they will perceive, that to insure public respect, there must be the substantial realities of humanity and justice, as well as lofty pretensions to them.

The people, having once discovered their power to reform abuses; having once tasted the sweets and enjoyed the reward of *such* exertion of their power, the government will perceive that they may be disposed to exercise it in other quarters, and will, in their turn, determine to anticipate the people. Thus, a noble contest will be begun, which we may hope will never cease, till rapacity and violence, oppression and cruelty are exterminated from the British dominions.

Liberty and popular rights, are favourite themes with Britons. Here, is a grand field for their exercise, their legitimate, unrestrained exercise. Here, the people may fearlessly indulge in all the enthusiasm of liberty; here, the love of power and of conquest may exert themselves to the uttermost, for no human power can resist you; your victory will be complete, your triumph bloodless; "FOR WHO IS HE THAT WILL HARM YOU, IF YE BE FOLLOWERS OF THAT WHICH IS GOOD?"

Slave emancipation is now said to have

become a party question; but who has made it such? Not those who have embraced, but those who have rejected it; or if not absolutely rejected, have betrayed it, Judas-like, with a kiss of hypocritical attachment, and sold it into the hands of its enemies.

Who then, we repeat the enquiry, who has made slave emancipation a party question? Those, who by taking it up sincerely and earnestly, might have converted it into a mighty bulwark, an impregnable fortress of their own, have abandoned it, and the PEOPLE, as is their bounden duty, have taken it up; yes, and they will *keep it up;* they have got strong hold of it; and they will never relinquish it, till they have carried it into triumphant execution!

It has been asserted, on good authority, that the abstinence of *one tenth* of the inhabitants of this country from West India sugar alone, would annihilate West India slavery! But the stronger the union against, the more complete will be the triumph over

it. Your obstinate refusal to receive the produce of slavery cannot be construed into political disaffection or contumely; you can be impeached of no treason against the monarch, no fraud upon his revenues, by your most pertinacious rejection of West India sugar; however earnestly pressed upon you by the right noble and right honourable sugar planters of both Houses of Parliament. Have nothing to do with their sugar; refuse it admission into your houses; let it perish, or be cast into the sea as a libation to the fishes; let the slave holders know that your resolution is inviolable, that you will never swerve from your solemn purpose to be contaminated no longer with their blood stained merchandize.

You *may* accomplish this great work of emancipation; you *may* easily, speedily and certainly redeem EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND of your fellow creatures from the most degrading and inhuman tyranny; but not without effort and perseverance. Objections to your project will start up on all sides of you; you will be assailed with sneer

and sarcasm, with declamation and pretended argument; all of which will be easily surmounted, whilst you bear in mind the simple, but sublime injunctions, to "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELVES;" to "DO UNTO OTHERS WHATSOEVER WE WOULD THAT THEY SHOULD DO UNTO YOU." But when we lose sight of these heavenly precepts, forget the example and authority of the Divine Preceptor, then will our hearts become hard and selfish, our resolution feeble and exposed to the invasion of every temptation; our exertions will slacken, and we shall sink again into slothful cold-hearted indifference.

We must then keep a guard over our own treacherous hearts, which are prompt to undertake but slack to perform. We must also guard vigilantly against treachery without as well as treachery within; against trick and artifice, fraud and imposture from the party whose cruel power and sordid interests we are resisting. Here we shall need to be lynx-eyed, or the subtile serpent in the shape of the slave-holder

will out-wit and be an over match for us. He will try to palm his sugar upon us under all sorts of disguises and deceptions, and without the utmost circumspection he will impose upon our credulity.

We commenced this our appeal somewhat, we confess, in the langurge of confidence and boasting; not (as we trust) in the language of *vain* confidence and boasting: for, let it be observed, our appeal is not an *indiscriminate* one. It is to the GENEROUS, NOBLE MINDED, the BENEVOLENT, CHRISTIAN people of England; not to the thoughtless and selfish, the sordid and callous. The conduct of these different characters, wherever principle is involved, we must expect to be different; on this great question, we may expect the difference to be strongly marked. One party will turn aside, with stoical indifference, from the heart-rending pictures exhibited by West Indian slavery, of human degradation and misery, or, it may be, heave a sigh or two of useless condolence, and then, like the priest and the Levite, in the

parable, pass on, on the other side. The other party, like the good Samaritan, will not bestow on the scourged and miserable captive mere idle sympathy and wordy commiseration, but will "bind up his wounds, pour in oil and wine," and never leave till he has "TAKEN CARE OF HIM;" till he has delivered him out of the hands of the merciless "thieves" into which he has fallen. Happily, this work of mercy may be easily and speedily accomplished. From the priest and the Levite we have now nothing to hope; but "certain Samaritans" can do all that is needful without their assistance.

Stand aside then (it may now be said), you who having admitted the crime of slavery, have *pretended* to advocate its abolition only the more effectually to retard and prevent it; stand aside, you who are accessible to no arguments but those of interest; who are insensible to all privations and sufferings but your own; you who give nothing to the cause of degraded and suffering humanity but idle sympathy: stand all

of you aside, make room for the GENEROUS, NOBLE MINDED, the BENEVOLENT, CHRISTIAN people of England; for men, who would regard themselves utterly unworthy of their own civil and religious privileges, were they not using every safe and practicable means of extending them to others; for christians, whose practice accords with their profession, whose zealous and active philanthropy corresponds with the divine, the universal charity of their principles; who regard SLAVERY as a foul stigma, a disgraceful brand on the national character, who regard it as an impious affront to the national religion, who, having the power to efface it, RESOLVE THAT IT SHALL EXIST NO LONGER.

The abstinence of ONE TENTH of the people from West India sugar would annihilate West India slavery! would rescue EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND HUMAN BEINGS FROM THE LOWEST POSSIBLE CONDITION OF MORAL DEGREDATION & PHYSICAL WRETCHEDNESS!! Can we, without a gross libel on the national character, imagine that the

number who will bind themselves to this species of abstinence, will fall short of this estimate? that we shall want the full compliment requisite for completing an object like this? The very idea will suffuse the cheek of a christian patriot with blushes. It would be a reproach and a shame not to be thought of. Still, there may be a waiting for precedents, for leading examples, whereby many well disposed individuals do themselves and the cause great injustice. Promptitude and expedition should be the watch words of the day.

The simple offering of resolute consistent abstinence from West India sugar, will be worth volumes of eloquent declamation against the cruelty of West India slavery. One determined effort to break the captive's chains, is worth all the arguments in the world against the injustice and wickedness of holding him in bondage.

Under existing circumstances, this species of abstinence is no longer a matter of option, which a christian *may*, or may *not*

adopt, and be guiltless. "He who *permits* oppression, having the power to resist it, in ever so small a degree, which he neglects to exert, shares in the crime." He may dismiss the subject, or hold his resolution respecting it in suspense, and still flatter himself that his religion and humanity remain unimpeached; but he is grossly imposed upon. "Faith, without works, is dead;" so is benevolence; it cannot be merely passive, if it be not active, in this great business, it is dead. And not only so, but its opposite dispositions, oppression and cruelty, are alive within him, though under latent and disguised appearances.

The sin and the shame of BRITISH SLAVERY lie at our own doors, belong individually to each of us who decline to bear *every testimony in our power against it.* We may not, perhaps, like the imputation, we may resent, and endeavour to throw it off, but conscience will bring it home to us, and it will stick close like the poisoned vest of Hercules. We are, *bona fide*, guilty

of the crime of detaining our fellow subjects in slavery, whilst we have the power of redeeming them, and refuse to exert it. And so long as we remain in this torpid indifference, so long the horrid vengeance (called judicial) just inflicted on the insurgents in Demerara, lie at our own door. Nay more, we may look on the judges who denounced those sentences, and see in them our own images reflected, for our present cold-hearted neutrality is but a necessary prelude to that accomplished barbarity at which we should arrive were we placed in the circumstances of West Indian slave holders. We may indignantly revolt at the comparison and exclaim with Hazael, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" but at the moment when self-deception, the most incurable of all deceptions, shall vanish, truth will present her mirror to our view, in which this dreadful character will be reflected, we shall be unable to turn our eyes from it, and be compelled to own the faithful resemblance.

Whilst you have the power then, rouse

yourselves from this opprobrious indifference; add all the weight of your example and influence, whatever it be, to the cause of humanity and justice, not to that of oppression and cruelty. It is but little, individually, that any of us can do towards the completion of this work of righteousness; but we can do much, every thing, by the combination of those little individual exertions on the right side of the question. We cannot remain neutral, we must join the interest of the poor negro, or that of his inhuman task-master. By abstaining from West India sugar, we take part with the slave, by persisting in its use, we take part with the slave-holder.

You say, you would abstain from West India sugar, if you were convinced that the object would be thereby accomplished. Whether it will, or will not be accomplished by this means, remains to be proved. The experiment will be tried, and by withholding your co-operation, you do *your best to render it abortive.* Your example is not so insignificant as you pretend. It will

discourage and damp the zeal of those around you, their example and influence, as well as your own, may be put into the wrong scale, which, after all, may possibly preponderate for want of the weight of such examples and influence as your's and their's having been given to the right one.

If it be true, that the abstinence of *one tenth* of the inhabitants of this country from West India sugar, would annihilate West India slavery, can it be a matter of doubt whether it be the duty of every christian to use his utmost exertions, by his own example and influence, to obtain the requisite complement? If abstinence from West India sugar be regarded merely in the light of an experiment, it is surely our imperative duty to give it a fair trial. This is a cause which every consideration of humanity, justice, and religion forbids us to abandon as hopeless; our exertions ought never to intermit until the object be accomplished.

A considerable body of the community

will persevere in their abstinence from West India sugar, whatever be its result; they will do so for conscience sake. Having been once acquainted with the horrid process by which it is procured, they feel themselves obliged to reject it. But what will be the effect of this resolution if it be not sufficiently general to put an end to that process? It will increase the embarrassments of the slave-holder, without materially diminishing the suffering of the slave. So that by withholding your co-operation, you do your utmost, not merely to *neutralize* the good resolution of your conscientious neighbours, but to give it an injurious direction; for the ultimate good of the slave-holder, as well as the slave, is an important object with the abolitionist.

But we have caught something of a dispiriting torpedo-like infection from these lukewarm, pseudo, philanthropists. We revert again to the GENEROUS, NOBLE MINDED, CHRISTIAN PEOPLE OF ENGLAND. To you, no duty can appear of more urgent necessity, none can have more to solicit,

to compel, your best exertions. The means of its accomplishment are so unexceptionable, so easy of access, so quiet, so inoffensive in their operation, and yet bear with such overwhelming force upon the mighty mischief to be encountered; that we stand amazed at the singular contrast, the strange disparity, between the means and the end; between the glorious victory to be obtained, and the simple method by which it is to be accomplished.

A grander experiment in morals was never tried than that which is now before you. A more summary or certain method of executing justice, on a large scale, was never discovered. This easy bloodless triumph over the most gigantic and lawless tyranny, will form a new era in history; will be recorded as a bright precedent, a glorious example to future generations. Nothing within the reach of human exertions can be imagined, more truly august, than that of a PEOPLE, tearing up, root and branch, an evil of such enormous magnitude, of such long and deep growth, of such menacing

and frightful aspect, as to defy the attacks of government, and make them afraid of approaching it.

How strikingly will such an example, illustrate the opposite natures of virtue and vice! How clearly will it demonstrate that one is the production of light, the other of darkness; that they can only live in their respective elements! Bring virtue into the light, and the more she is exposed to its resplendent rays, the more will her beauties expand and brighten. Drag vice into the light, or let her BE SO INFATUATED AS TO EXPOSE HERSELF TO ITS SEVERE SCRUTINY, AND THOUGH SHE HAVE THE INTREPID ASPECT AND ADAMANTINE FRONT OF WEST INDIAN SLAVERY, SHE MUST WITHER AND DIE UNDER ITS PENETRATING GLANCE.

Leicester: printed by T. Thompson.